

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application as amended. Claims 1-31 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 8, 11, 12, 14, and 21 have been amended. Claims 32-53 have been added. No claims have been canceled.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-2, 8-10, 21, 23, and 29-31 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wei (U.S. Publication 2003/0200254 A1) in further view of Ikemoto (U.S. Patent 5,969,717). The Examiner rejected Claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wei and Ikemoto as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Kashiwagi (U.S. Patent 6,037,939). The Examiner rejected Claims 11-20, 22, and 25-27 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wei in further view of Ikemoto, Kashiwagi, and Smith (U.S. Publication 2002/0167543 A1). The Examiner rejected Claims 4-6 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wei and Ikemoto as applied to claims 1 and 21 above, and further in view of Smith. The Examiner rejected Claims 7 and 28 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wei and Ikemoto as applied to claims 1 and 21 above, and further in view of Abdelnur (U.S. Patent 6,429,882 B1).

Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner's rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are not proper. Wei was filed February 19, 2003, which is over a year after the filing date of the application. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Wei is not prior art to the present invention. Applicant is aware that Wei cites a related provisional application that was filed on December 19, 2000; however, Wei cannot and does not claim priority to this application. Because the reference date associated with Wei is more than a year after the filing date of the present application, Wei is not prior art to the present invention. Therefore, the present invention is not obvious in view of Wei or a combination of one or more other references with Wei.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submits that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) have been overcome by the amendments and the remarks and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested. Applicants submit that Claims 1-31 as amended and Claims 32-53 are in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited.

Please charge any shortages and credit any overcharges to our Deposit Account No. 02-2666.

Respectfully submitted,

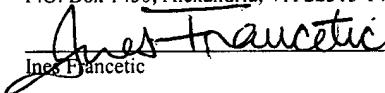
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 Ines Francetic 11/24/04  
Ines Francetic Date